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## BOOK REVIEWS.

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*Statistik und Gesellschaftslehre.* By DR. GEORG VON MAYR. *Erster Band: Theoretische Statistik.* Freiburg i. B. and Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1895. 8vo. pp. vii+202.

THE monograph before us is the first of two which are to form parts V. and VI. of the introductory volume to von Marquardsen's and von Seydel's *Handbuch des Oeffentlichen Rechts*. It contains about 200 pages and is subdivided into five sections, viz., introduction; general principles of statistical science; method and technique of statistics; administrative statistics; history of statistics. A subsequent monograph will be devoted solely to practical or descriptive statistics.

Dr. von Mayr pertinently, and somewhat facetiously, remarks that considering the time which the word "statistics" has been admitted to the vocabulary of science it has given rise to an enormous amount of controversy. So many definitions have been attempted that one might easily present an extended statistic of definitions. Perhaps we should obtain rough accuracy by grouping them in three classes. Under this plan we have conceptions of statistics as exhaustive descriptions and comparisons of states, as constituting a science of human communities, and solely as a science of method. Our author's views place him in the second category.

The little word "and" in the title furnishes the key to Dr. von Mayr's position. He distinguishes between statistics as a method and as a wholly independent science. As a method it is auxiliary to all branches where numerical data are employed, as well as where the ordinary logical processes of deduction and induction do not suffice. But it is more than this, it is the exact social science, exact because affording quantitative measurements and utilizing numerical terms of expression. It is not identical with sociology, the co-ordinating science of society in general, but it is one of the social sciences, systematically exposing the actual occurrences of social life and laws resulting therefrom "upon the basis of the quantitative observation of social aggregates." With this distinction the confusion involved in the conception of statistics as a science disappears. A definite subject-matter, the

quantitative observation and exposition of social aggregates, elevates this branch of knowledge into the dignity of a science. At the same time we are led to understand why this independent science of statistics, in its narrower meaning, has not a monopoly of statistical method—a method which scholars know is applicable to the natural as well as to the social sciences.

Professor Mayo-Smith, in a paper on statistics and sociology read before the American Economic Association, very clearly developed the conception of statistics as an exact social science. The definition, much of whose utility hinges upon the word “exact,” coming almost simultaneously, yet independently, from two authoritative sources, ought to have great weight and cannot but contribute towards clearer views.

Dr. von Mayr has written an excellent book. He has given in reasonable compass and readable form the salient elements of statistical history, theory, and technique, and the pertinent facts of administrative organization. His copious bibliographical citations at the conclusion of each paragraph are an especially valuable feature.

Where the reviewer's views are in practical accord with the author's, it is superfluous to do more than to mention leading characteristics and to commend closer acquaintance. In the present instance we add the confession that the second volume is awaited with impatient interest.

E. R. L. GOULD.

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*A Handy Book of the Labour Laws.* By GEORGE HOWELL.  
London: Macmillan & Co., 1895. 8vo. pp. xii + 338.

Two editions of this compilation were published in 1876 and almost immediately exhausted. Increasing demand for the book, together with the many changes in the labor legislation of England and in the position of trades-unions, have at last called from the editor a third edition. Its aim is to bring within the reach of the English laborer a definite knowledge of his rights and duties under different acts of Parliament. The collection professes to include all the important labor legislation of the last twenty-five years. Under some of the acts the laborer may appear in his own behalf, and copies of such legal forms as are not filled out by court officers are therefore reprinted.

The most important portions of the book to the laborers are probably the introductions, in which the editor sets forth the purpose and